

[2 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: It is very, very petty. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE:Sir, I have not even named the State. They have become agitated. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister reply. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, the VRS fund is not meant for creating capital assets. It is meant for enabling that particular unit or enterprise to function productively and create assets in the future. It is not meant to create assets by itself. This type of confusion has been deliberately created. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, I need your protection. My question will remain. Am I, by putting this question, creating confusion? I want a direction from you, Sir. He says I am creating confusion by putting this question. I seek your protection. Please see the record. If your direction is that by putting this question, I am creating confusion, I will withdraw my question. Otherwise, he has to reply to this question next week. He cannot get away. Please direct him to reply to my question next week or ask me to withdraw my question. I am prepared. Either he has to reply to this question again next week or I will withdraw my question, as you direct, Sir. (*Interruptions*). As a Minister, he cannot talk like this. I will not leave this matter. I want a reply to my supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Foreign visits

*163 PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY:

SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has visited a number of foreign countries during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details of the foreign countries visited; and

(c) the outcome of each such visit?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Sir, details of visits undertaken by External Affairs Minister are given in the Statement.

Statement

Foreign visits by Minister of External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh

Sl. No.	Name of the country visited	Details of the foreign countries visited	Outcome of each such visit
1.	Nepal (8-11 Sept. 1999)	September 8-11, 1999	Represented India in the inauguration ceremony by PM of Nepal of the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan and the Maternity Hospital in Kathmandu, both developed with Indian assistance. Reviewed Indo-Nepal Relations.
2.	Kazakhstan (13-15 Sept. 1999)	Attended Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) 13-15 September, 1999.	EAM signed Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations among the CICA Member Countries.
3.	New York, USA (19-29 Sept. 1999)	To attend the UNGA meeting held in New York, USA 19-29 September, 1999.	During the 54th UNGA, four countries publicly supported Indian candidature for permanent membership of Security Council i.e., Russia, Vietnam, Laos and Cyprus. Apart from getting support for Indian candidature, a major break-through of this UNGA was acceptance of Indian draft of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. This Convention commits Member States to combat the menace of international terrorism, and more importantly it also commits them to stop all assistance and sponsorship for terrorism emanating from their territory. During his speech in UNGA, EAM added that the Security Council must be made more representative, with developing countries inducted as members to reflect the changes in the UN membership and today's political realities.

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4.	Durban (CHOGM) (12-15 Nov. 1999)	EAM was a member of the Indian delegation to the Summit Meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) in Durban, South Africa, from 12-15 November, 1999. EAM assisted the Prime Minister in his discussions during the executive sessions at CHOGM.	India played a leading role in the discussions on the political and economic issues as well as in the drafting of the Durban Communique and the Fancourt Declaration issued at the conclusion of the meeting. Heads of Government renewed their commitment to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values and reviewed global political and economic developments. They called for firm deterrent measures by the UNSC against States, entities and organisations which harbour and train terrorists or promote international terrorism. They called for increased international cooperation to ensure that benefits of globalisation are shared more equitably. CHOGM endorsed the decision to suspend the military regime in Pakistan from the councils of the Commonwealth pending restoration of democracy, requested the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group to keep the situation in Pakistan under review.
5.	Japan (23-26 Nov. 1999)	Japan (November 23-26, 1999)	During EAM's visit to Japan, both sides decided on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — India and Japan agreed to reinvigorate high-level contacts. An invitation was extended to the Japanese Prime Minister to visit India (the then Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited India on 21-25 August, 2000). — EAM invited Japanese Foreign Minister to visit India. — Both sides decided to re-constitute the Parliamentary Group on India and Japan (this is being done).

- They agreed to pursue the initiative of setting up an Eminent Persons' Group to enhance the bilateral relations with new dynamism (the Eminent Persons' Group has been set up. The first meeting was held on 29-30 January 2001. The second meeting is expected to take place in the last quarter of 2001).
 - Both sides decided to celebrate appropriately the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan.
 - Both agreed to pursue high-level dialogue at Vice Ministers' and Secretary level to discuss political, economic and commercial issues.
 - Both sides decided to institute a Comprehensive Security Dialogue (the first Comprehensive Security Dialogue was held in Tokyo on 18 July, 2001).
 - Official level institutional dialogue between India and Japan will be held on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and Asian matters.
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6.	Helsinki (2-3 Dec. 1999)	EAM met with Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Relations of the EU. Both leaders discussed India-EU relations and important global issues, especially co-operation in specific areas such as narcotics & drugs trafficking, environment, human rights and civil society dialogue.	The EU Troika Ministerial Meeting was extremely productive as these discussions focussed on areas such as South Asian security and prospects of Europe and Asia in the 21st Century. The discussions led to a shared understanding on the growth of fundamentalism, rise of cross border terrorism and the spread of the Taliban ideology. Subsequently, during the visit of Commissioner Patten in January 2001 the first India-EU Round Table was launched on 29th January, 2001.
7.	Afghanistan (31 Dec. 1999)	EAM visited Kandahar, Afghanistan on 31.12.1999.	EAM visited Kandahar, Afghanistan for the release of hostages in the hijacked Indian Airlines flight IC-814. EAM had decided to go to Kandahar, Afghanistan so as to ensure that the termination of hijacking, the smooth release of and safe return of passengers and crew took place without any last minute hitch.
8.	Italy (11-12 Jan. 2000)	The visit was a bilateral visit during which EAM held consultations with his counterpart on measures to strengthen bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on a wide range of regional and international issues of mutual interest. India and Italy decided to strengthen their cooperation to fight the menace of terrorism.	The visit helped in promotion of better understanding, friendship and increased cooperation between the two countries.

- United Kingdom
12—14 Jan. 2000
24—27 May 2000
13—17 Nov. 2000
- Several matters were discussed during these visits including global and regional issues, UN peace-keeping operations and Security Council reform, cooperation in counter-terrorism and consular matters, cooperation in the field of education and defence cooperation. In pursuance of these discussions, both governments have taken a number of steps to further enhance India-UK relations. These include: the setting up of a non-governmental group, the India-UK Round Table to broaden the bilateral dialogue and to suggest new ways of consolidating the relationship. An India-UK Joint Working Group has been established to provide an institutional mechanism for cooperation in combating international terrorism and drug trafficking. A Defence Consultative group has been meeting to further bilateral defence cooperation and an official level dialogue has commenced to enhance mutual understanding on issues pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation.

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10. Oman
(20-23 Jan. 2000)
- Oman/20-23.1.2000, to attend Development of greater understanding and review of IOR/ARC Meeting multilateral matters in the Indian Ocean Region.
11. Nigeria
(27-29 March, 2000)
- To lead the Indian delegation The agreed Minutes of the meeting of the third session of at the Third Session of the Indo-Nigerian Joint Commission provided a definitive Indo-Nigerian Joint momentum to the economic content of Indo-Nigerian Commission.

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12.	Portugal March 30 - April 1, 2000	<p>The visit from March 30-April 1, 2000 was undertaken for preparation for the first ever Indo-EU Summit in end June 2000. EAM had extensive consultation with his Portuguese counterpart on bilateral, regional and international issues. He signed an agreement on economic & Industrial Cooperation between India and Portugal on 31st March, 2000.</p>	<p>bilateral relations. EAM met his counterpart and called on Nigerian President Obasanjo, thereby reinforcing the momentum in Indo-Nigerian relations.</p>
	27-29 June, 2000	<p>EAM visited Portugal from 27 - 29 June, 2000 as a member of the official delegation led by the PM for Indo-EU Summit as well as Indo-Portugal Bilateral Summit. An Agreement was signed on financing of Civil Aviation Sector.</p>	<p>During the visit from 27-29 June, 2000 EAM participated in both the bilateral and EU Troika meetings with PM. The visit helped in further strengthening relations between India and the EU as well as with Portugal. It also enabled both sides to discuss bottlenecks in India-EU commercial and economic cooperation.</p>

13. Cartagena, Colombia To attend NAM summit held in Cartagena, Colombia, 8-9 April, 2000
(8-9 April, 2000)

India's concerns with regards to the developments that have taken place in neighbouring Afghanistan in the Taliban regime, particularly with respect to the safety and security of Indian nationals living in Afghanistan, found expression through the NAM communique. The subject of humanitarian intervention, which would entail unwarranted interference in the country's internal affairs was also rejected. India's proposal for adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism also received support through the communique. India's initiative to take into account concerns of predominant agrarian economies in multilateral negotiations on agriculture were also incorporated in the communique. An MOU was signed incorporating all items discussed and agreed to in the meetings of six committees on Petroleum & Natural Gas; Trade Transport and Communications; Industry; Agriculture & Rural Development and Culture, consular, Information and Science & Technology. An agreement was also signed on the establishment of a Joint Committee on the supply of Iranian gas to India. The mandate of the Committee is to study and examine all aspects relating to the Gas Pipeline from Iran to India. The two sides agreed to work closely to enhance cooperation in the areas of mutual concern like terrorism, sea-piracy etc. and India's interaction with ASEAN.
14. Iran EAM visited Iran on 19-23 May, 2000.
(19-23 May, 2000)

There were detailed discussions with Singapore PM, FM and senior Minister Lee Kuan on bilateral as well as regional issues.
15. Singapore
(1-3 June, 2000)

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16.	Sri Lanka (11-12 June 2000)	Sri Lanka June 11-12, 2000	The Minister of External Affairs held discussions with the Sri Lanka President, Foreign Minister, Leader of the Opposition and several other political leaders. During the visit, India offered to extend Sri Lanka a credit line of US \$100 million. The possibilities of Sri Lanka's purchasing wheat, rice and sugar on a counter trade basis from India, were also discussed.
17.	Russian Federation (22-24 June, 2000)	Bilateral visit to the Russian Federation from June 22-24, 2000	Minister of External Affairs had detailed discussions with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Igor Ivanov on bilateral matters and on regional and international issues of mutual interest. Minister of External Affairs called on the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin. He met Secretary of the Security Council, Mr. Sergei Ivanov and the Deputy Prime Minister and the then Co-Chairman of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission, Dr. Viktor Khristenko. EAM also visited St. Petersburg where he met the Governor of St. Petersburg, Mr. Vladimir Yakoviev and addressed the School of International Relations, University of St. Petersburg on "The dimensions of India's Foreign Policy in the New Millennium". The visit helped in strengthening Indo-Russian bilateral relations and to prepare for the visit of Russian President Putin to India in October 2000. During a joint Press Conference with EAM, the Russian Foreign Minister once again publicly expressed Russia's support to India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

18. **Warsaw, Poland
(25-27 June, 2000)**
- To attend Ministerial Meeting India was successful in conveying its primary concerns, on the Community of Democracies held in Warsaw, members, state sponsored, cross border and other forms of terrorism and threat posed to democratic regimes by the overthrow of constitutionally elected governments, through the communique.
- At Warsaw, India was one of the Co-Convenors of the Conference Towards a Community of Democracies". The other Convenors were Poland, Chile, the Czech Republic, South Korea, Mali and the USA. During the visit, EAM interacted with President of Poland Alexander Kwasniewski, Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek, the Speakers of the two Houses of the Parliament and Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek. EAM also met with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

19. **Palestine
(30 June 2000)**
- Minister of External Affairs To convey solidarity with the Palestinian people and to called on the President and inaugurate two Indian-funded projects in the Palestinian held discussions with Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and the Secretary General of the Presidency.
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20.	Israel (30 June—3 July, 2000)	In addition to calls on the President and Prime Minister, EAM had discussions with Foreign Minister, Minister for Regional Development and the Opposition Leader. The two sides agreed to set up a Ministerial-level Joint Commission with a view to developing a long-term framework of cooperation and to monitor ongoing interactions. No agreement was signed during the visit.	The visit enabled the two sides to focus on strengthening existing multifaceted cooperation, in the fields of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Defence and Trade.
21.	Bangkok (26—29 July, 2000)	India's cooperative programme with ASEAN was discussed in the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Meeting. The Global Economic situation was discussed in PMC	India's involvement with ASEAN strengthens our relations with South East Asia - a region of commercial, political and strategic interest to us.

10+10 Meeting. No agreements were signed during the visit. EAM also attended the 7th ARF Ministerial Meeting. The inaugural meeting of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation was also held during this visit. EAM also held bilateral consultations with several other Foreign Ministers of the ARF Member States.

India's association with the ARF is consistent with our 'Look-East-policy' and the stronger relations we are attempting with South-East Asian countries. ASEAN is a part of our extended neighbourhood and India both gains from and contributes to the peace, security and stability in the region. The ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences are useful as they focus on trade, investment and economic cooperation issues. The Mekong-Ganga cooperation is a six country initiative designed to strengthen cooperation in Tourism, Culture, Human Resource Development and Communication fields.

22. Switzerland (4 Sept. 2000)
- The visit was a Bilateral visit. This was the first Ministerial exchange since 1981 and There was exchange of views marked the substantive upgrading in relations including on wide range of issues viz. bilateral trade especially Swiss investments in India, in the bilateral - political and trade infrastructure sector, financial services, insurance sector developments in the Indian and field of information technology are expected to region, the EU disarmament and non-proliferation, development funding activities etc.

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23.	USA (7-19 Sept. 2000)	EAM visited Washington D.C. to accompany the Prime Minister on official visit. Talks held with President Clinton and his administration. Separate meetings with Joint Session of Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, House International Relations Committee, India Caucus, Business Chambers and think tanks. Signed Joint Statement: MoU on Cooperation in Energy Sector; and commercial project agreements at level to Trade Chambers.	Visit helped consolidate and deepen new phase of friendship between India and U.S. By interacting with the two Presidential Candidates, reaffirmed bipartisan support existing in U.S. for close ties with India. Helped raise India's international political and diplomatic profile. Private investment of about US \$6 bn. announced, including about \$4 bn. for three power projects and a new US EXIM bank line of credit of Approx. \$1 bn. India's concerns with respect to issues such as the realization of a nuclear free world and challenges posed by terrorism, drugs and illicit arms trafficking, as well as the necessity for Security Council reform, were reflected through the Millennium Declaration. India's willingness to take on the responsibilities of permanent membership of the Security Council were also reiterated once again through EAM's Statement delivered on behalf of India in the General Debate of the Millennium Assembly.

To accompany the Prime Minister to the UN Millennium Summit and to attend the UNGA Session held in New York, USA 7-19 September, 2000

24. Algeria (23-25 Oct. 2000) Minister of External Affairs The areas of mutual cooperation were identified and it was received by the President was decided to put in place an institutional frame-work to and the Prime Minister. He had enhance bilateral cooperation.

detailed exchange of views on global and bilateral issues with the Algerian counterpart. The efforts were aimed at diversification of the existing excellent relations between the two countries. MoU on Foreign Office Consultations was signed.

25 Vietnam (6-8 Nov. 2000) EAM co-chaired the 10th Joint international issues were discussed.
India-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting and a separate meeting with his counterpart. EAM also called on the President and the Prime Minister of Vietnam.

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26.	Lao PDR (8-10 Nov. 2000)	EAM co-chaired 3rd India-Lao Joint Commission Meeting and attended Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Meeting. EAM also called on the President and the Prime Minister of Lao besides his counterpart, the Dy. PM and FM.	Three bilateral agreements were signed (i) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (ii) Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation and (iii) Work Plan under the MoU on Agriculture. At the conclusion of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Meeting, a 'Vientiane Declaration' was adopted. During calls issues of bilateral and mutual interest were discussed.
27.	Germany (17-18 Jan. 2001)	EAM visited Germany for the inauguration of new Chancery Building and bilateral meeting. He utilised the opportunity to meet his German counterpart Mr. Joschka Fischer.	He met with FM Joschka Fischer and other important officials of the German government where he held discussions on important strategic issues of mutual interest.
28.	Saudi Arabia (20-21 Jan. 2001)	Saudi Arabia 20-21.1.2001 bilateral visit.	Bilateral relations were further strengthened. MoU on Foreign Office Consultations was signed and an MoU on Co-operation in Combating Crime was agreed to.
29.	Syria (30 Jan.-1 Feb. 2001)	EAM exchanged views on issues of bilateral concern with the Syrian President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The talks were aimed at enhancing cooperation especially in the economic and scientific fields.	EAM exchanged views on bilateral regional and global issues. It was decided to enhance the economic content of the bilateral relationship.

30. Egypt (3-4 Feb. 2001)

The 4th Session of the Indo-Egypt Joint Commission was held in Cairo. The Egyptian side was headed by Foreign Minister Amre Moussa. The talks included discussions on ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation as well as an exchange of views on crucial regional and global issues of mutual interest. The two sides signed the following:

1. Protocol for cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the Institute for Diplomatic Studies of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

2. The minutes of the Joint Commission Meeting including the deliberations of the four sub-committees which looked into following fields:

- (a) Trade and Economic Cooperation
 - (b) Scientific and Technological Cooperation
 - (c) Cultural Cooperation
 - (d) Information Technology and Electronics
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31.	Myanmar (13-15 Feb. 2001)	The visit was part of the ongoing high level interaction between India and Myanmar.	The visit gave an impetus to bilateral Cooperation. Minister of External Affairs (EAM) had discussions with the Myanmar leadership including on various issues of bilateral interest. The two sides reviewed the progress of the proposed cross-border projects. EAM inaugurated the Tamu-Kalemyo-Kalewa road during the visit, which was upgraded with the Indian assistance. EAM also inaugurated the India-Myanmar Friendship Centre for Remote Sensing and Data Processing in Yangon. The Centre was set up with the assistance of Government of India.
32.	Denmark (2-3 April, 2001)	The visit was a working visit on the invitation of Danish Foreign Minister. During the visit, EAM had meetings with Danish PM and FM.	During EAM's visit the Danish Foreign Minister conveyed Denmark's support for the comprehensive convention on international Terrorism as proposed by India in the UN General Assembly. Denmark also agreed to promote bilateral trade investments by Danish Companies in India.
33.	Sweden (3-4 April, 2001)	EAM visited Stockholm to attend the 13th India-EU Troika Ministerial Meeting.	The meeting is part of the annual consultations with the EU Troika at ministerial level and highlights the growing importance of these relations.
34.	USA (5-7 April, 2001)	EAM visited Washington D.C. at the invitation of U.S. Secretary of State. Discussions held with President Bush, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defence and National Security Adviser—on Commitment of both sides to speed up pace of Indo-U.S. relations.	Visit within six months of new U.S. Administration coming to office indicative of seriousness of purpose by both sides, to maintain close ties, as provided for under dialogue Architecture. Two sides have agreed in principle to resume defence cooperation.

35. **Iran**
(9-13 May, 2001)
- EAM visited Iran on 9-13 May. During Prime Minister's visit the Tehran Declaration and 2001 as member of Prime six Agreements/MoUs were signed. These were Minister's official delegation. agreements on:
- (i) Trade and Economic Cooperation; and
 - (ii) Customs Cooperation.
- MoUs were signed on:
- (i) Information Technology;
 - (ii) Cooperation in the field of Energy;
 - (iii) Cooperation in the field of Power (Conventional and non-conventional sources); and
 - (iv) Technical Cooperation.
36. **Australia**
(19-24 June, 2001)
- EAM participated in the first India-Australia Ministerial Framework Meeting to further strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. EAM also met Australian PM Howard, Trade Minister Mark Vaile, Defence Minister Peter Reith, FM Downer and Opposition leader, Kim Beazley, Leader of Labour Party.
37. **New Zealand**
(24-26 June, 2001)
- During the meeting PM of New Zealand outlined assistance being rendered by New Zealand for conduct of election in Fiji in August. FM of New Zealand was also confident that election will be fair and impartial in Fiji. Discussions were also held on bilateral, regional and international issues.